

INTRODUCTION

These findings are from a survey of 415 oil and gas workers conducted between March and May 2025. It follows the Our Power report, a set of ten demands created by over 1,000 oil and gas workers for a worker-led energy transition in the North Sea.

The survey paints a bleak picture. Oil and gas workers feel insecure and unsupported. Conditions in the industry are declining and the threat of redundancy is rife. **Nearly three quarters of workers would consider or are already looking to move out of the industry.** But they don't feel supported by governments – or their employers – to do so.

Two years on from the publication of the Our Power report – a worker-led plan for an energy transition in the North Sea – **oil and gas workers are still demanding decisive action from the UK and Scottish governments.** This survey shines a light on the policies which are supported by the oil and gas workforce, and which, if prioritised, would not only gather support from workers but could have a transformative effect on the regions most at risk from the oil and gas transition.

Workers want to see public investment in ports and wind manufacturing, to ensure good quality, unionised, secure jobs are materialised. Workers want fully funded training, improved conditions, trade union rights, and job guarantees to ensure their future is secured. And workers want to feel the benefits of the energy transition, with profits from the new renewables industry returned to workers and communities, through increased public ownership of the energy industry.

Oil and gas workers are demanding a Workers' Transition.



This briefing is endorsed by:



KEY FINDINGS

| | | |
|----|--|----|
| 1. | WORKING CONDITIONS | 3 |
| 2. | UK GOVERNMENT SUPPORT | 5 |
| 3. | SUPPORT FOR GREAT BRITISH ENERGY | 7 |
| 4. | SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT SUPPORT | 9 |
| 5. | INDUSTRY SUPPORT | 11 |
| 6. | BACKGROUND DETAILS OF RESPONDENTS | 12 |



WORKING CONDITIONS

Despite oil and gas companies making record profits in recent years, **over half of the 415 workers surveyed felt that conditions had declined in the industry over the past five years.** Workers cited job insecurity and threat of redundancy as key concerns. One worker accused the industry of “using the decline” to exploit the remaining North Sea workforce.

Fewer than 2 in 10 oil and gas workers reported feeling happy in their job, with workers reporting “poor morale” and growing “tension”. Another said employers were treating workers “like dirt” and “safety was suffering”. A number of workers spoke about their declining mental and physical health, alongside “constant anxiety for the future”, widespread distress about their job security, and “stress and fear of not being able to provide” for their families.

In this context, **over a quarter of the 415 workers polled said they were actively looking for work in another industry.** Nearly half said they would consider leaving the industry altogether. One worker reported the mass exodus of skilled workers leaving oil and gas jobs.

When asked about their current conditions in the industry, responses included:

“ There have been so many redundancy cycles regularly. It’s a worry. Eight out of the last fourteen years I’ve had no pay rises and the years I do, they are very modest! Aberdeen particularly is being left behind the likes of Edinburgh. I couldn’t afford to move there now. ”

– Oil and gas worker,
Onshore oil and gas company

“ I have been pretty stressed and depressed about it. It’s almost like waiting for the axe to fall [...] Also I have had no luck trying to transition to renewables. ”

– Oil and gas worker,
Drilling offshore

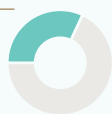
KEY FINDINGS INCLUDE:

53%



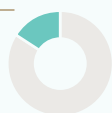
of workers surveyed said conditions have declined in the last 5 years. Only 14% said they have improved.

32%



of workers polled said they were unsatisfied or very unsatisfied with current conditions. Concerns ranged from job insecurity and the threat of redundancy to low pay and poor company culture.

16%



reported feeling happy with their job.

71%



would consider moving to a job outside of the oil and gas industry.

27%



of those are already looking for alternative employment.

1 in 10



workers surveyed are considering retirement.

“ It brings unrest and makes the workforce uneasy, everyone is worried about their job, and how to provide for the family going forward when the well paid jobs run dry. ”

– Oil and gas worker,
Inspection offshore

2.

UK GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

Almost all of those surveyed (95%) said that the UK government isn't doing enough to support oil and gas workers into new renewable energy jobs. Most want to see a fully funded training scheme, as well as financial support for those oil and gas workers unable to find equivalent work. One worker spoke about gaining his offshore wind qualifications only to find there was no work available for him to move into.

An overwhelming majority (85%) of those surveyed want to see more investment in UK wind manufacturing to create jobs in Scotland and the North East of England, with 90% also wanting to see more investment in upgrading ports to enable this to happen. 9 in 10 respondents want to see public and community ownership of energy production expanded, as well as the nationalisation of ports.

While workers overwhelmingly support policies to deliver a fair transition for themselves and their communities, many expressed concerns – particularly in qualitative responses – that political decisions, such as changes to the windfall tax and oil and gas licensing, are being made without clear, concrete plans to protect jobs throughout the transition.

When asked what the UK government should do to support workers, responses included:

“ They need to massively financially support the North East of Scotland, so jobs are still in the area from the renewables sector. The area relies too much on oil as a sector for employment of people in the community. Current investment is nowhere near as good as they should be. ”

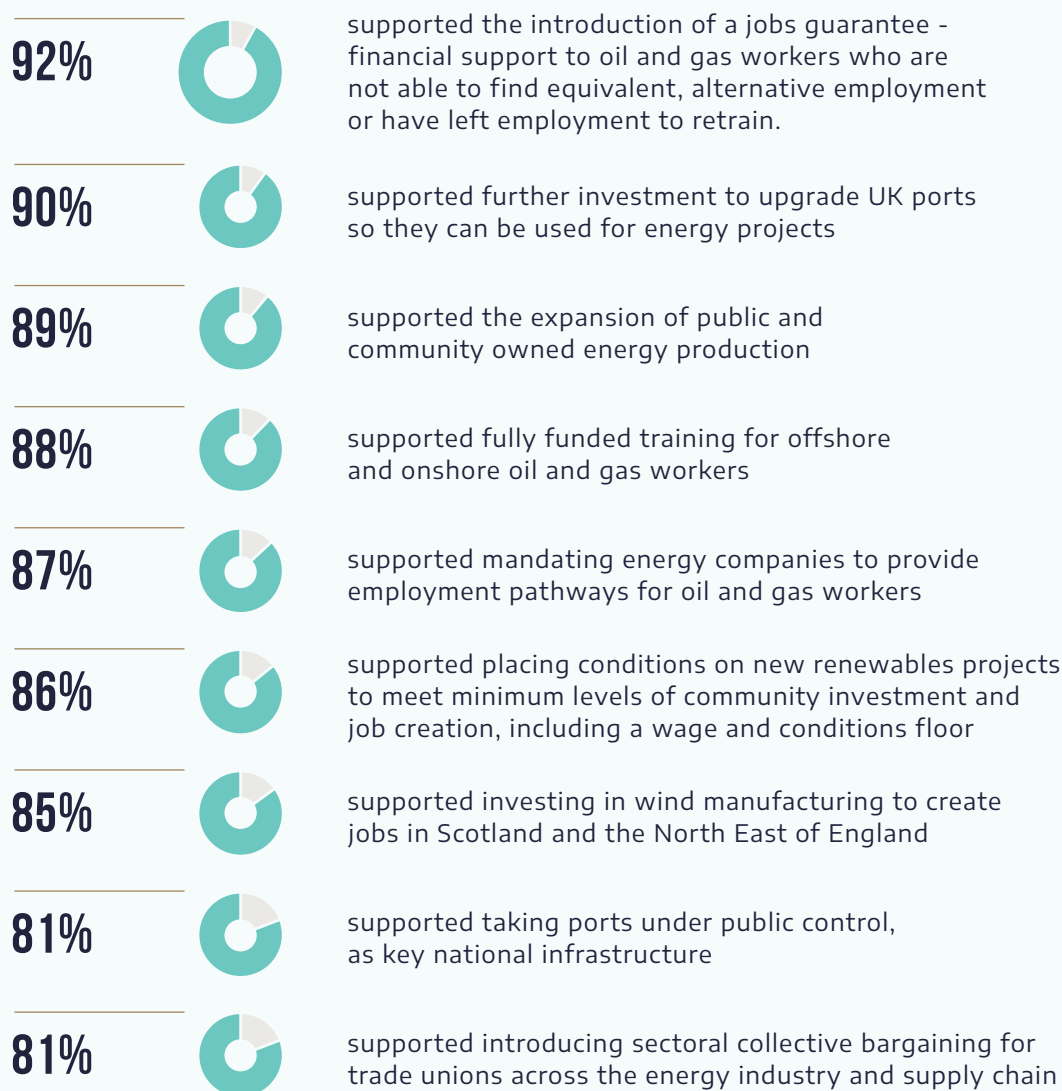
– Oil and gas worker,
Production offshore

“ Everyone is down these days as the threat to our way of life is constant. Not just at work but onshore also. Without the oil and gas industry the whole of the North of Scotland's livelihood is in jeopardy. The economy in the North East in particular is at threat of total collapse. Since every other potential industry has been centralised to the Central belt including wind. The future is not looking good. Due to failure at a political level time and time again. ”

– Oil and gas worker,
Drilling offshore

KEY FINDINGS INCLUDE:

The majority of the 415 respondents supported the following proposals for steps the UK government could take to enable a Workers' Transition:



“ [The government should] insist on a higher content of UK manufacturing and labour use for all future products. ”

– Oil and gas worker,
Retired

“ We need visible support right now. Redundancies are happening and nothing is in place. ”

– Oil and gas worker,
Drilling offshore

3.

SUPPORT FOR GREAT BRITISH ENERGY

Oil and gas workers are positive about the creation of Great British Energy, but want to see bolder policies from the government to ensure it delivers for the workforce and their communities. 9 in 10 workers think GB Energy should have a retail arm of the company that sells renewable energy directly to people's homes to reduce the cost of energy, and a similar number think it should have a legal responsibility to deliver jobs and transition pathways for energy workers. The oil and gas workers surveyed want to be able to shape GB Energy, including through elected worker reps on the board.

When asked how GB Energy could deliver for the workforce, responses included:

“ Start making government investments in the energy sector and reverse privatisation of the energy sector as it is a proven disaster for the UK. The government needs to invest as the private sector is not doing so - and it needs to invest in the full value chain if necessary, building the factories that are needed to build things using local workers. We cannot as a Nation afford to constantly buy equipment from overseas suppliers. ”

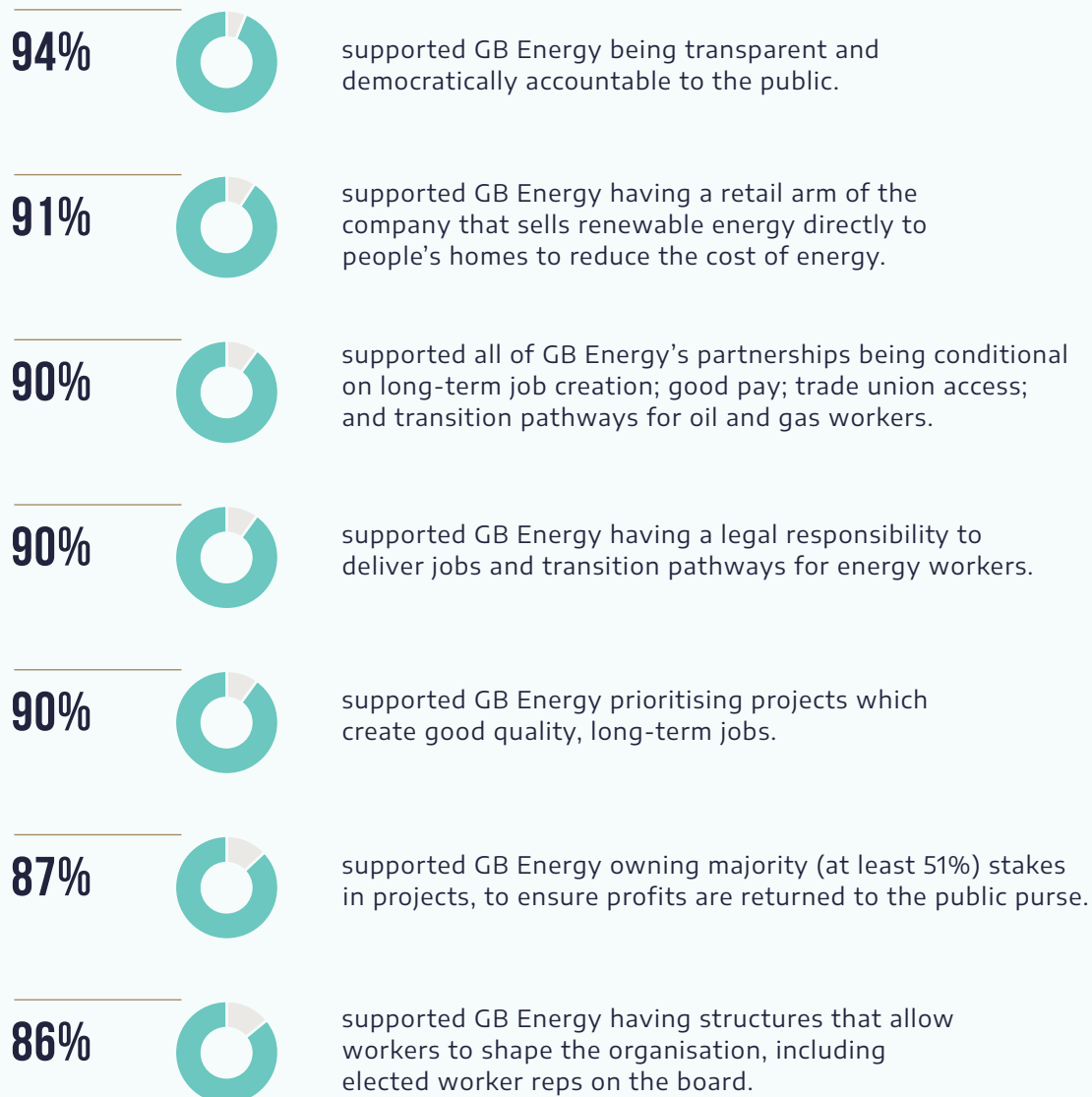
– Oil and gas worker,
Onshore supply chain

“ [The government should] listen to us. It's very nice having soundbites and coming to sites but we don't feel represented by the current government. Be transparent about GB Energy, we were told it was going to be beneficial to our area, but what is it and what does it do? ”

– Oil and gas worker,
Onshore midstream and/or downstream

KEY FINDINGS INCLUDE:

The majority of the 415 respondents supported the following proposals for Great British Energy:



4.

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

The vast majority of workers surveyed (83%) said that the Scottish government isn't doing enough to support workers in the oil and gas industry and to help them find alternative employment. Workers want to see the Scottish government expand the funding available to further education colleges for skills and re-training, as well as paid time off for training for oil and gas workers changing sectors. Most workers (87%) also think investment by the Scottish National Investment Bank should be scaled up, enabling it to make more and larger investments in manufacturing and infrastructure, including taking equity stakes in Scottish ports.

When asked what the Scottish government should do to support workers, responses included:

“ Ensure that conversations take place with workers (not just those that are unionised) and not solely focus on corporate feedback. ”

– Oil and gas worker,
Onshore oil and gas company

“ Make and enforce local content laws, e.g. manufacturing, local hiring etc. ”

– Oil and gas worker,
Well services offshore

“ Provide some of the promised support to transition into renewables. [...] I haven't seen any support and I don't know anyone who has. ”

– Oil and gas worker,
Production offshore

KEY FINDINGS INCLUDE:

The majority of the 415 respondents supported the following proposals for steps the Scottish government could take to enable a Workers Transition:



**“ We keep hearing about us
“transitioning” to renewables;
so where are these jobs?
We have seen very little
so far, and nothing like the
wages we get offshore. ”**

– Oil and gas worker,
Maintenance offshore

5.

INDUSTRY SUPPORT

Critically, oil and gas workers want to see their employers doing more – with two thirds (77%) saying the industry isn't doing enough to help them and fewer than 1 in 10 happy with the support they get from the industry. Almost all (89%) want oil firms to be forced to provide pathways out of oil and gas and into other industries. Workers want industry to take care of its workforce, prioritising working conditions over shareholder profits and to stop issuing redundancies every time there is a "hint of a slowdown".

When asked what the oil and gas industry should do to support workers, responses included:

“ Return profits to the workforce equally as their shareholders. Salaries have declined and been stagnant for over a decade yet the staff have taken the brunt of this and the executives still ticked their bonus boxes. ”

– Oil and gas worker,
Onshore oil and gas company

“ Stop laying us all off whilst you pay shareholders billions and give yourselves massive bonuses. ”

– Oil and gas worker,
Onshore supply chain

“ Support the workers by offering training to seek alternative employment. ”

– Oil and gas worker,
Maintenance offshore

“ Listen to the offshore workers more. Conditions are the worst they have been and that is with 10+ years experience offshore now. ”

– Oil and gas worker,
Onshore oil and gas company

“ Look at how Norway runs its installations and treats its workers. Same oil, same gas. Worlds apart in regards to how they work. ”

– Oil and gas worker,
Maintenance offshore

6.

BACKGROUND
DETAILS OF
RESPONDENTS

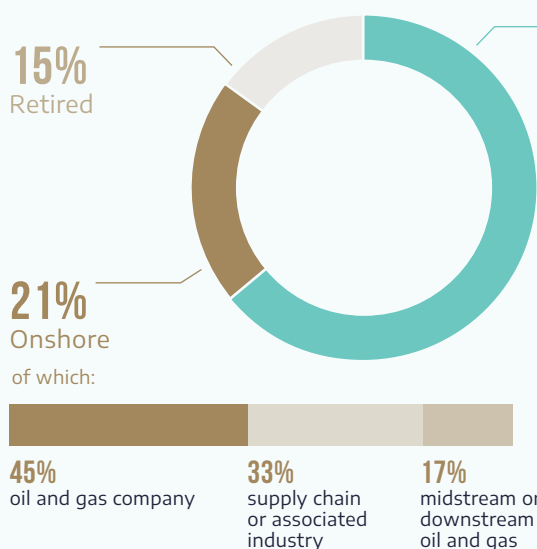
Of the over 400 workers surveyed, **64%** work offshore, **21%** work onshore and **15%** have retired.

60% of the offshore workers who took the survey describe themselves as 'core crew', with employee contracts. **33%** described themselves as contractors.

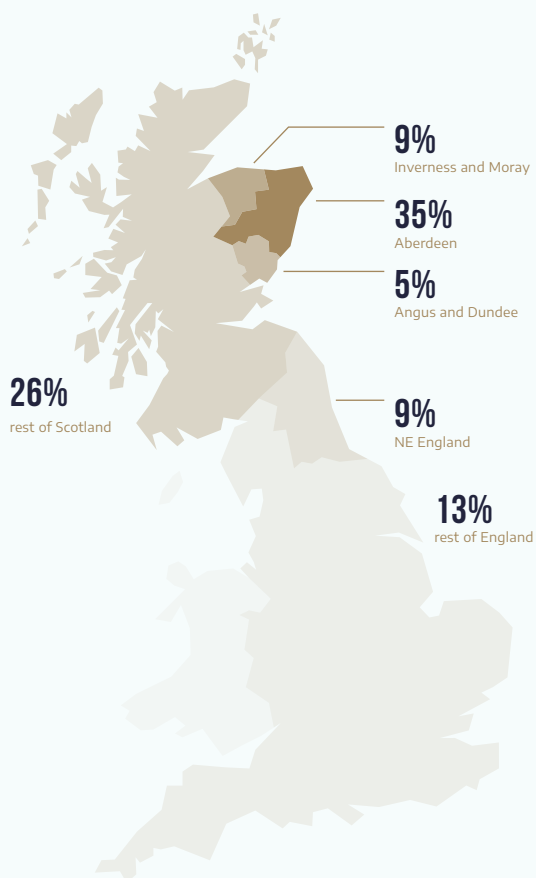
Those that work offshore cover a broad range of departments, including maintenance, drilling, subsea, production, health and safety, catering and diving.

Nearly half (**45%**) of those that work onshore work in an oil and gas company. **33%** work in the supply chain or associated industry and **17%** work in midstream or downstream oil and gas, including transportation and storage, refineries, processing or purification.

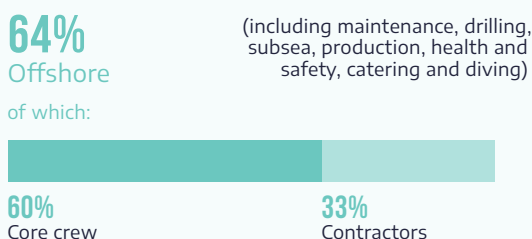
Where do you work?



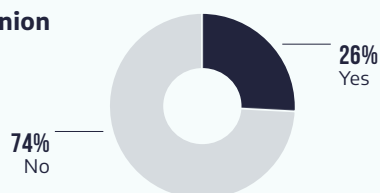
Where do you live?



Of the oil and gas workers surveyed, respondents were overwhelmingly based in Scotland, with around 2 in 10 based in England.



Are you a union member?:



Inside pages background photo by Peter Iain Campbell.

Cover photos by **Hazel Falck** and Peter Iain Campbell.
Wind turbine photos by Nicholas Docherty via Unsplash.

Design and layout by Jaś Lewicki.

